ASIFA EAST

# ANYMATOR

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANIMATED ARTS

## ASIFA-East Awards Jury Screenings

Tuesday and Wednesday, January 14 & 15
Starting 6 pm
N.Y.U. 721 Broadway (Corner Waverly & B'way)
Leo Jaffe Theater (through lobby to right)

and

## Annual ASIFA-East Animated Film Awards

Thursday, January 30
Starting 6:30 PM
Donnell Library Center Auditorium
Donnell Media Center
20 West 53rd Street Across from MoMA
Reception to be held 5:30PM -6:30PM
in Donnell Library's Green Room

JANUARY 1992

On November 23, 1991, **Wang Shu Chen**, animation director at the Shanghai Animation Studio, died of cancer. I met Wang Shu Chen first in 1987, when he served on the Jury of the Annecy Animation Festival with Jane Aaron. Later in 1988, when I was in Shanghai, we became good friends. He was a very gentle and kind man who could work intensely on his own beautiful work and yet stop immediately if one of his co-workers needed help. As a Chinese Moslem, he believed in ASIFA's ONE PEOPLE collaboration by Moslems and Jews, and created a wonderful brush-painting animation illustrating a poem by Kahlil Gibran. His film, SELECTING BEAUTY, was featured at the Shanghai Animation Festival, and is distributed by Terry Thoren. At his death, he was working on a Chinese-Italian co-production of TURANDOT. Those of us lucky enough to have known him will remember his smile.

*—David Ehrlich*

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Congratulations to ASIFA-East members **Flip Johnson** and **Amy Kravitz** for winning awards at the Fourth Los Angeles International Animation Celebration. Flip Johnson won second prize in the Experimental category for his film "PULP", and Amy Kravitz won one of ten awards from the MTV Station I.D. Evironmental Storyboards competition, with her plan called "LITERACY".

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Help us put together the ASIFA-East Newsletter a little better. When sending contributions written on a computer, please send the information on disk via a DOUBLE DENSITY disk.
We have a little trouble reading the High Density disks. This applies to both Mac and PC users. Thanks!


**ASIFA-EAST**
**The International Animated Film Society**
**c/o Linda Simensky**
**470 West 24th Street, #15A**
**New York, N.Y. 10011**

**A PROGRAM OF THE CULTURAL COUNCIL FOUNDATION**



**ASIFA EAST**
**The International Animated Film Society (New York Chapter)**
**A program of the Cultural Council Foundation**

c/o Linda Simensky
470 West 24th Street, #15A
New York, N.Y. 10011



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## ASIFA PROGRAM • JAN. 14&15, & 30th

# ASIFA-East Awards Jury Screenings

On two nights ASIFA-East members of good standing (those who have dues current) will vote on all film and tape submissions to be included in the ASIFA-East Awards.
The jury will vote on what film & tapes will best represent the marry categories that film animation strives.
If you are not a current member, in the past ASIFA-East has furnished a period of time before jury selection to update your membership allowing you to be eligible to vote.

# ASIFA-EAST AWARDS

This is just an advance notice to get your film completed so that it can compete in the annual ASIFA-East competition. Other festivals come and go, but this one has been going on for years. Animated shorts are given three or more prizes in each of the categories of Direction, Design, Animation, Concept, and Sound/Music. In addition there are special prizes for best Children's Film, for the film most expressive of Charles Samu's goals of international understanding, for best Student films, and a number of Honorable Mentions. The "Jury" is composed of our peers, all the ASIFA-East members who show up in the midst of a January snowstorm to vote on the films they like the best. The prize-winning films are subsequently screened to a New York audience that has often topped 300. The prize-winning films then go on to screenings at each of the other ASIFA groups in the U.S. ASIFA-San Francisco members have adopted a wonderful policy of themselves voting on the winning films, giving cash prizes to the top three choices. Deadline will be in early January. For entry forms, write: ASIFA-East Awards, c/o Linda Simensky, 470 W24th Street, #15A, New York, N.Y. 10011. Your chapter President should also be able to send you a copy. .

# The Fourth Los Angeles International Animation Celebration

**by Linda Simensky**

This year, I spent my first Halloween away from the Northeast. It seemed rather unusual to be driving around in 80 degree weather on a day usually marked by falling leaves and sweaters, but I was in L.A. for the Fourth L.A. International Animation Celebration. The festival was sponsored by Expanded Entertainment, Terry Thoren's company which brings us the International Tournees and the Animation Celebrations.

The festival started in a most surreal way, with the Cartoon Costume Ball at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center. People from DIC and Turner wearing their companies' characters' costumes wandered around amongst the cleverly dressed members of the L.A. animation industry. A handful of New Yorkers were in attendance, with Candy Kugel as a bee, Bill Plympton as himself, and John Payson as a cool guy from MTV. I was dressed in a Waldo costume (from WHERE'S WALDO), so people I had never met before kept yelling to me, "I've been looking all over for you." Jetlag set in quickly.

There were about three screenings a night, and more on the weekends. There were a lot of really great films, but sometimes just too many films, causing viewer fatigue. Many of us felt this way during a somewhat tedious computer animation show, where dazzling special effects and a lot of spinning rings and teacups put me right to sleep.

Film highlights for me included some new material by favorites of mine, Richard Condie (The Apprentice) and Cathy Joritz (Give Aids the Freeze). I also enjoyed Cosgrove Hall's The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship, Chris Hinton's Blackfly, Mario Lajoie's Elvis Meets the Spider People From Hell (I liked the title), and Private View by Steve West. There was also a Bill Plympton premiere - The Tune - a feature film we'll be hearing a lot about very soon.

There were some interesting film programs, as well. Jerry Beck did a great job putting together a show of lost Warner Brothers cartoons. I also thought the German movie Werner Beinhart was pretty funny, however I think I was one of the few.

Gavrilo Gnatovich of Minnesota emerged as one of the festival's most popular animators, and his Avery-influenced film Prehysterical Days, was a big hit.

Two of the better programs were the weekend seminars. The Prime Time Animation seminar was interesting because, other than Matt Groening and Klasky Csupo, the other participants were mostly producers and creators who were having a rough

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# Expanded Entertainment

Presents

## The National Film Board of Canada's

# Animation Festival

Celebrating 50 Years of Animation Excellence at the National Film Board of Canada

Expanded Entertainment President Terry Thoren invites animation fans from the U.S. and Canada to join a spectacular tribute to 50 years of Canadian animation in The National Film Board of Canada's Animation Festival.

Films the National Film Board have produced have been nominated for Academy Awards more than 50 times times, winning eight. Their achievement is second only to the major U.S. commercial studios.

In 1939, the Canadian government asked John Grierson, pioneer of the documentary, to found the National Film Board in Ottawa. Its mandate was to interpret Canada to Canadians and to other nations. In 1941 Grierson made a historic phone call to fellow Scot Norman McLaren. He invited McLaren to bring his animation to Canada. McLaren accepted the offer and revolutionized the world of animation. He made more than 40 films, winning 200 awards in a career that spanned almost 50 years with National Film Board.

The National Film Board provides a unique environment for all its filmmakers, protected from the usual commercial restrictions and allowing them to give free reign to their artistic vision. Animators like McLaren might not have survived in the commercial world but at the National Film Board their creativity was allowed to flourish.

1991 marks the 50th anniversary of National Film Board of Canada's Animation Department. The National Film Board has produced a total of 711 animated films in 50 years. The animated films of the National Film Board have won over 620 prizes or awards world-wide, including 25 Academy Award nominations and four Oscars for: Neighbours (1953), Le Chateau de Sable/The Sand Castle (1978), Special Delivery (1979), and Every Child (1980). The National Film Board has a staff of six producers and 14 full-time animators in its Montreal studios and over 20 freelance animators working in Montreal and other Canadian National Film Board centers.

Among the films included:

"Two Sisters" by Caroline Leaf, "The Apprentice" by Richard Condie and "Jours de Plaine" by Réal Bérard and André Leduc.

Recently this moving and optimistic letter came to us from Zagreb, Yugoslavia where hostilities have made life miserable for the populace, including many of our friends in animation. Yet here we see that they are undaunted and hope fervently to host another edition of the long running Zagreb International Festival of Animated Films in the coming year.

Dear Friend, 11/5/91

I believe that in all recent months you have often raised the a question without a popular reply- what is happening in the country that gave, among other things of durable value, a company such as ZAGREB FILM- and indeed, what's up with ZAGREB FILM?

Our country is in the grip of dramatic changes, Croatia is attempting successfully to realize its independence and its freedom of spirit and action. Forces which must be designated as the will of exploitation, have imposed on us a dirty war just to keep their prey and their privileges. Our losses and sacrifices are enormous... human lives, historical and religious monuments, entire cities, civilian population... their number is horrifying and still growing.

ZAGREB FILM has not been spared of those losses. But, like the rest of the country, we are not giving up. We continue to live- even under bombs- and we are firmly convinced that we shall survive.

The independence of our country shall mean that from now on all our activities shall be directed from the city of Zagreb, open to all creative artists. Our activity in ASIFA shall be, there is no doubt, stronger more stressed, more enthusiasm displayed. In cooperation with all great names of animated films, with all of your colleagues whom you know, we shall appreciate your respect and estimation of our results in animation.

To witness these efforts, I can advise you already that the 10th World Festival of Animated Films shall take place in Zagreb in 1992. We shall not be defeated.

May we ask you to stay in touch with us, to call us, to write to us, to inform your friends about Croatia, a civilized country of democracy, liberty and culture. We shall be grateful for it. And we shall keep you informed about the developments here, particularly regarding the next festival.

Yours friendly,

Zlatko Paqvlinic - General manager - Zagreb Film • 41000 Zagreb, Vlaska 70, Yugoslavia

Shanghai International Animation Film Festival 1992
618 Wan Hang Road, Shaghai China

Entry forms are available for the Shanghai Festival. This is the second international event to be sponsored in China and it will be held from December 5th to 10th, 1992 in Shanghai. The last such festival was held three years ago and was a huge success. Shanghai is once again extending a warm welcome to animators around the world to submit films and to attend. They deem it a great honor to welcome all animators to display their creative talents and meet with Chinese animators in 1992. Zhenyuan is president of the festival. Contact Howard Beckerman for the entry forms.

**Faculty opening for animation instructor and coordinator. The photography/Film Animation Department of the University of the Arts, Philadelphia College of Art and Design, is currently accepting applications for a full-time, tenured teaching position in animation. The appointment commences with the Fall semester, 1992.**

**Applicants should have an M.F.A. or equivalent professional experience and a commitment to personal/ experimenmtal work in animation expressed through examples of their own films. Additional requirements include: Strong organizational skills, as well as prior teaching experience, knowledge of live action filmming, sound, history of animation, drawing or computer competence on Amiga or Macintosh Amiga. (The University is an Equal Opprtunity Employer)**

**Contact: Animation search committee, Photography/Film/Animation Department, The University of the Arts, Philadelphia College of Art and design, Broad and pine Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19102**

## EDITH ZORNOW

Edith Zornow died on November 13th of cancer. She was instrumental in giving many a budding animator or producer an opportunity to do teaching spots for the Children's Television Workshop. In the early 1970s, Sesame Street and The Electric Company made their debut to rave notices from television reviewers and educators, just as several of the local commercial animation studios were biting the dust. Many of us were suddenly cast in the role of animation suppliers and it was to Edith Zornow that we owed this good fortune. She had won an Emmy Award for the series, The Art Of Film, in 1964 and became a producer for Children's Television Workshop in 1970, the initial season of the Sesame Street program. She also supervised the film divison of Grove Press, championing the film release of unique foriegn movies such as, Finnegan's Wake, Titticut Follies and I Am Curious (Yellow). She was always understanding and sympathetic to animators and their problems and acted as a buffer between the creative people and the corporate types. In contrast to many ad agency producers she seemed little interested in self aggrandizement and made space for us to do what we enjoyed most— animation. She will be missed.

—*Howard Beckerman*

# Festival Report - - Cinanima '91

by John Schnall

The film which opened every program of Cinanima '91 featured model animation of a train leaving its track and riding around Espinho, Portugal. The film, made by an 18 year old Portuguese student who had never animated before, is technically crude but strangely compelling. Watching it, you could somehow feel the enthusiasm of the animator, which more than made up for its technical shortcomings.

Cinanima 91, which took place November 12-17 in the beautiful city of Espinho, also had more than its share of technical shortcomings. For example, the daily programs listed names of films, but not names of filmmakers, whose presence was never publicly acknowledged. Also, projection problems were the rule rather than the exception, even when a 35mm print was screened. Etc., etc. Despite the various problems of this festival, however, I found it to be the most inspiring festival I've yet attended.

Cinanima is a small festival and, unlike Annecy, there were few business people and no "famous" animators there. Because of this, unlike Annecy, I never felt anyone I was talking to was looking over my shoulder for the "important" people to network with. Just friendly people interested in animation. The festival accepted almost half the entries it received into competition, so there was plenty to see.

One element which makes this festival truly unique is the audience. Most screening were attended by large numbers of children from the local schools. It was refreshing to see films, even films intended primarily for adults, with a young audience. Unfortunately, the silent portion of a program of early German films was too demanding for the children. The loudest silent films I've ever seen...

I was the only American who attended Cinanima '91. In addition to Flip Johnson's PULP, which was the only American film to win an award, there were several excellent American films in competition. My personal favorite was Simi Nallaseth's DIABOLIC WIFE, a computer film featuring great design and an unusual, allegorical narrative. Other standouts: Nicole Tostevin's SUSPENDED ABBEY, Jerilyn Mettlin's SALAMANDREN and David Ehrlich's latest collaboration, DANCE OF NATURE.

As always, there were one or two controversies associated with the festival. Three films from Zagreb, Yugoslavia were not chosen for competition. The organizing committee decided to screen the films anyway, in the spirit of support for a speedy resolution of Yugoslavia's current crisis. The films, all by Branko Ranitovic, were shown at a midnight screening, and were received enthusiastically. Many wondered why the films were excluded in the first place.

The grand prize of the festival was a bit controversial as well. The film, BALLOON (see last month's ASIFA-East Newsletter), while technically amazing, seemed superficial when compared with such films as Caroline Leaf's BETWEEN TWO SISTERS. Meanwhile, some of my favorite films in the festival, including THE STAIN (a dark story about incest and suicide told in a fairy-tale style) and THE LAST FIGHT (a Russian film about a general's battle against cockroaches), received no awards.

For those who are interested, the awards:

Under 5 min. - 40 STAB WOUNDS; Claudius Gentinetta, Switzerland

5-10 min. - two films were awarded-

ADAM; Peter Lord, United Kingdom

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS, ; Michaela Pavlatova, Czechoslovakia

10 to 40 min. - two films were awarded-

BETWEEN TWO SISTERS; Caroline Leaf, Canada

AFTER THE OAK SHEDS ITS LEAVES; Vlasta Pospisilova, Czechoslovakia

No films were awarded in the feature film and advertising film categories.

First Film-AMENTIA; Sergie Ainutdinov, USSR

Experimental Film-PULP; Flip Johnson, USA

Film for Children-DREAM EXPRESS; Jimmy Murakami, United Kingdom

Journalists' Award-ADAM

Special Jury Award-for the excellent combination of 2D and 3D animation: MANIPULATION; Daniel Greaves, United Kingdom

Special Jury Award- for the original and strong way of expressing the need for an ecological and peaceful planet, THE VOICE OF THE EARTH; Richard Antonius, Sweden.

Young Portuguese Director Prize-LOVE STORY; Alice Geirinhas

City of Espinho Prize-DREAMS OF LIGHT; Jean Pierre Lemouland, France.

Grand Prize-BALLOON; Ken Lidster, United Kingdom

I guess it takes a funky little festival like this one to help me fall back in love with animation. Well, it worked, I have to finish this up now so I can get back to work on my new film. I wasn't using the "inspiring" loosely.

# EAST COAST INDEPENDENTS: Part Two

## David Ehrlich

Sending out advance copy of Part One of this column to a few friends elicited some very interesting and profound responses to the issue of "independence". We've decided that, rather than focusing this column on career news, as originally intended, I would structure it as a kind of open dialogue between independents. This is a dynamic transitional period for most of us, and a forum giving expression to the hopes and the frustrations of independent animators will be helpful not only to those artists but to others just entering the field and to those afficionadoes sitting on the sidelines. The actual news of independents should be sent to Ray Kosarin, 316 12th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215. Ray, who works at Michael Sporn's studio, will write the Independents' News column every month.

The first reaction to my column came in from George Griffin, one of the leaders of the Independents since the seventies. In fact, it was George who was chosen by the Cardiff Animation Festival to put together the show of New York Independents, so it is fitting that he take the floor first.

" 'Independent' has always been for me more of an attitude than an objective description of economic condition or function. The attitude pervades several aspects of our artistic practice: esthetics, concept or message, audience expectation, and the artist's subjective consciousness. It's very difficult to proceed from a purely reductive position such as "If a film is made for a specific market then it can't be 'independent'.

"What if Terry Thoren asked me to make a typical Griffin piece for the next Tournee. Would I be filling a market niche or indulging in pure personal expression? Caroline Leaf recently did an MTV "Art Minute" in a style clearly her own. Bill Plympton did a commercial for Trivial Pursuit also in his own style. Of these 3 examples (the first hypothetical) only Bill's would fall into a "dependent" category for, though he is obviously an independent animator, his work for an advertising agency would be a collaboration where his art would be used to sell products. Even if the admen loved his first draft and no changes were demanded, it would still belong to them, and be distributed as an example of what Trivial Pursuit, not Plympton, can do for a consumer. Now, if Terry asked me to change something in my Tournee film it too would cease to be "independent" because his role would be less like a patron and more like a client. All this begs the issue of contextualization which might support the extreme view that Caroline's piece merely acts as program material to deliver an audience to a market, that everything on MTV is commercial, hence not independent. By the same logic Terry's Tournees and Celebrations might become (as they doubtless have for many naive viewers) feature films made by diverse animator/sub-contractors.

"Can our senses tell us what constitutes "independence?" Probably not, since MTV has swallowed up so many of the techniques and styles of the experimental film movement of the 70's and 80's. If a piece containing all sorts of innovative visuals concludes with the familiar corporate logo then I would call the work an expression of the corporation, not the artist: sponsorship at best, appropriation at worst. I'm not knocking it. A lot of great stuff is to be found on MTV. I wouldn't call it independent animation.

"If you detect a note of cynicism it must be a vestigial trace of 60's idealism which equated money with evil. It could be argued that accepting a grant from a governmental arts commission (back when it was more common, min the 70's, when one could actually live and work on such a stipend) was a comparable pact with the devil. But these grants often supported work which was formally radical, containing a personal voice rarely heard in animation until then. Unlike WPA supported photographers and artists who felt compelled to work for the uplift of the masses, we had the luxury of pursuing our own personal visions, no matter how irrelevant.

"At the very beginning of my animated film work I used the skills developed in commercial studios to make my own personal films, and my personal films in turn helped me to find work at CTW. This symbiosis continues to this day: a wild lettering style I developed for a series of AT&T spots was used in my latest independent film, and actually released (thanks to Mr. Thoren) well before the spots were aired. I still think of myself as an "independent" animator because my relationship with the corporate world is on a free-lance, ad hoc basis. I don't maintain a permanent staff and separate office space, costs which would drive me to look for any work just to stay in business. This temporary business arrangement also seems to suit the artists who work for me. The popular image of the "independent animator" working in solitude is still valid for students, those just starting out, and a considerable number of artists. It is still the way I write, design, and plan films, but it is by no means the only model for independent production. As projects become longer and more complex, one's role can shift to that of "director", overseer as well as artist. The difficult task is maintaining both control and spontaneity.

"To sum up, I do think it's important to maintain the distinction of "independent animation", even if it appears to be less experimental than what is on MTV. It makes fewer assumptions about the quality of animation than about the unencumbered position of the animator who can make artistic decisions without regard to pressures from market, censorship, or patronage. Ultimately it has a great deal to do with the authorship of our work: who is speaking and what does it mean."

George's comments on the MTV segments bring to mind the 10-second MTV spot by Sky David (Dennis Pies), that I saw last week, when I was down in Philadelphia with Leif Marcussen. Sky is one of my favorite animation artists, constantly developing his pure and very personal visual exploration of time and space. I happened to see his spot at the end of a screening of the complete body of his work. He chuckled as he showed us the spot done several years ago, as if to say that this was what one had to do to earn a living. The spot began as have many of his magnificent "independent" films, with swirling abstract mists of color, drawing the viewer into a dreamlike, mystical reverie. Then, only in the final 36 frames, did the abstract mists transform into the usually insipid MTV logo.

I thought about this piece afterwards. Was it, as George would say," an expression of the corporation and not the

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# MICKEY MOUSE: by K

# WHAT MAKES HIM SO POP

If you ask almost anyone anywhere in the world, "Who is Mickey Mouse?," I am sure, with an acknowledging smile of affection, they will tell you. How did such a little creature, now 63 years old, become one of the world's most popular characters? Known in France as Michel Souris; in Germany as Michael Maus; in Japan he is called Miki Kuchi; Miguel Ratoncito in Spain; in Italy, Topolino; Mikel Mus in Greece and El Raton Mickey in Argentina, there is hardly a place in the world where Mickey Mouse hasn't made people laugh. "Sometimes I've tried to figure out why Mickey appealed to the whole world," Walt Disney wrote. "Everybody's tried to figure it out. So far as I know, nobody has."

I am tremendously grateful that I had the great, good fortune to meet the Aesthetic Realism of Eli Siegel and learn why something is beautiful, truly cared for and lives - whether a cartoon character, a kitten, a tree, a symphony, or any work of art. It is in this mighty and kind principle by Eli Siegel:

All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making oneof opposites is what we are going after in ourselves.

I believe Mickey Mouse has appealed to so many people for so many years because when people see Mickey Mouse, they like the world more which Aesthetic Realism shows is every person's deepest desire. And the reason people like the world more is that where there is art in Mickey Mouse, he puts opposites together, opposites people have been troubled by and want to put together in themselves. Can we learn anything about ourselves through a mouse? If an animal can stand for man, does that make a one of the personal and impersonal? Mice have been seen as lowly creat- ures, easily dismissed, but through Mickey, a mouse is nothing to be sneezed at and people can look more impersonally at themselves with humor, and see a relation of such opposites as modesty and boldness - a mouse who is a timid tailor who subdues a giant; high and low - a mouse who is an impresario; grace and serious- ness - a mouse who plays "Turkey in the Straw" on the teeth of a cow; the ordinary and strange - a mouse who wears red, short pants and white gloves.

Walt Disney had taken something that's repelled people and showed it as friendly. Mice have been seen as sneaky, devious, but Mickey is steadfast and loyal, a mouse you can count on. One of the admirable things about Mickey Mouse is that he doesn't use the adversity that the world can have, as an excuse to be mean himself, which, I have learned from Aesthetic Realism, is a big danger for a self. (I think Walt Disney, who in his life was kinder to animals than to people, deeply would have liked to have been more like Mickey. I think most people admire Mickey for this). Walt Disney described him this way:

He's a pretty nice fellow who never does anybody any harm,who gets into scrapes through no fault of his own, butalways manages to come up grinning. Why he's even beenfaithful to one girl in his life, Minnie Mouse.

**I. MICKEY HAS A HISTORY:**

Mickey Mouse was conceived by Walt Disney in the late twenties, on a train bound from New York to Hollywood.

Originally named Mortimer, for a pet mouse Walt Disney kept in his old Kansas City studio, it seems that Mrs. Disney thought the name was too pompous, and so, the name "Mickey" came to be. On November 18, 1928, at the Colony Theatre in New York City, Mickey Mouse made his debut in Steamboat Willie, the first public performance of an animated sound cartoon and he became an overnight sensation.

The Mickey Mouse who was first seen in the movie-houses of the late twenties, was quite different from the Mickey of today. His structure then, was more rat-like in shape. His teeth were fierce and sharp and his pranks could be quite cruel. An in- stance of opposites becoming more one, arose from a feeling that Mickey, wasn't as likable as he could be, and so, his structure evolved into something more affecting, more humanlike - a mouse who is essentially rounder and kinder. Although Mickey's popularity grew, I think his older, sharper side could have been more incorporated into his newer, sweeter self. Mickey became a bit too good, too mild - his character became somewhat simple, limited. And I think Mickey's squeaky voice, which was the falsetto voice of Walt Disney for the first twenty years of Mickey's career, can get a little irritating. Mickey could use a little more of what Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, the Road Runner and even Tweetie-Pie, have. I think more of the struggle that Aesthetic Realism shows is in every person, between the desire to respect the world, see meaning in it, which is man's deepest desire, and the desire to have contempt for it, to mock it and try to see it as meaningless, Mickey Mouse could show more of.

One instance where Mickey portrayed this, which has large meaning and is a favorite of mine, is in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," from the film Fantasia. Power, I learned from Aesthetic Realism, can be of two kinds, one good and the other bad. We all want power and importance, but the question is, on what basis - through respect,

**en Kimmelman**

# ULAR?

a desire to see and know; or power through contempt, the desire to affect people and things without respect for them; through owning, controlling and exploiting? Tired of lugging water from the well to fill up the Sorcer- er's tub, when he leaves, Mickey takes the Sorcerer's magic hat and uses it to bring a broom to life and then orders it to do his work. The broom energetically obeys and Mickey, so pleased with himself takes a nap and dreams of himself as a powerful maestro conducting the universe. He moves planets, stars and directs clouds into a great swirl and changes the seas into leaping tidal waves. He is then abruptly awoken by splashing water from the overflowing tub which the broom has filled past the brim. Mickey can't stop the broom and so he chops it up into splinters which form into an army of new brooms that continue to carry water from the well. Mickey is now drowning in a whirlpool when the Sorcer- er returns and parts the waters. With a sheepish grin, Mickey hands the angry Sorcerer his hat, picks up the buckets and tries to tiptoe past him, acting only too glad to resume his work, and as he does, the Sorcerer gives him a good swat on his backside with the broom. In bad power magic is preferred over logic and Mickey, in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," shows humorously the deleterious results it always makes for.

Illustration by Wallace Keller

**II. MICKEY MOUSE: IS HE JUST CUTE?**

Mickey Mouse is a caricature of a mouse and good caricature is also always true humor; for, as Eli Siegel writes about the technique of humor in Definitions and Comment: Being A Description of the world:

There is something untoward, disproportionate, excessive, unsymmetrical, in a caricature. But the disproportionitself is dealt with proportionately. The ugly itself isdealt with beautifully, or with form.

Mickey Mouse evolved into a mouse that is cute and charming and "The Disney artists," writes Charles Solomon in The History of Animation:

discovered that characters with the proportions of a humanbaby would be perceived as cute; a large head with big, low-set eyes and a small nose and mouth; a little, rounded body; chubby limbs with tiny hands and feet.

But as I looked more closely, it was exciting to see how it is the opposites of proportion and disproportion, the symmetrical and the awry are what makes Mickey cute and funny. Mickey's head and eyes are large, like the proportions of a baby, but instead of a small nose and mouth, he is given a large oval-shaped nose and a big mouth and also huge, round ears. His pear-shaped body, which goes from narrow shoulders out to a little pot-belly, adds to the humor. Mice hands and feet, which are usually delicate and tiny, are drawn very large on Mickey. It would be difficult to imagine Mickey, who is a little pigeon-toed, successfully sneaking around with those large, plump, bright yellow shoes, that make him appear a little clumsy, but also firmly planted on the ground.

**III. POPULAR FOR TWO REASONS:**

Although Mickey is admirable in many ways, in another way he can appeal to something in people which shouldn't be appealed to - the feeling that 'I'm just a poor, small thing up against a big, cruel world where people are out to get me.' Mickey is often made too much the innocent caught in an evil world through no fault of his own. This is a feeling I've falsely had in my life and I am very grateful to have been asked this kind question by Eli Siegel in an Aesthetic Realism class: "Mr. Kimmelman, are people trying to be happy, or are they out to hurt you?" It was this question and questions like it that changed my life - made me a better artist, a fairer and a more happily, animated person.

But something that always surprised and pleased me about a Mickey Mouse cartoon was the variety of ways Mickey would appear. He has portrayed a good deal of the diversity of mankind and one can get a sense through him, of the ordinary person seen humor- ously, with some dignity and grandeur - a feeling of the "little man" who rises to win. An example of some of the many characters Mickey has played over the years, are, a farmer, an impresario, a teamster, a musician, a gaucho, a store-keeper, a pioneer, a taxi driver, a circus performer, a plumber, an Arab, a magician, a tailor, an inventor, a Hawaiian, a fireman. Mickey Mouse can encourage us to be less snobbish and more related to people by having us feel the universality of man as sweeter and kinder.

I am grateful to the Aesthetic Realism of Eli Siegel for enabling me to be able to see all reality, including the art of animation truly. As I looked more closely at Mickey Mouse in relation to the opposites and saw more about his meaning, I came to care for him more. Mickey Mouse, through his humor, charm, and ethics, at his best, is a mouse, who shows the world as likable and and this is a large reason why people everywhere like Mickey Mouse.

# FILM FESTIVALS

## Part FOUR by David Ehrlich

**1) BACA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**

Now in its 26th edition, this festival used to be one of the most prestigious independent film festivals the U.S. For many years, the entry fee was $20, and films chosen for screening were paid a minimum rental fee. The screenings were very well-attended by afficionados of the genre, and Jury members who awarded special certificates would also write complete film reviews that would be sent on to the filmmakers. There are now no more reviews written or sent; "small honorariums" go only to "several of the selected films"; the screenings I have attended in the last few years average 25-30 spectators, mostly students; and most depressing of all, the entry fee is now $40. Even with this $40, you must enclose your own stamped postcard for acknowledgement of receipt of your work. The screenings of selected films will be held at several locations in March, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Millenium, and Anthology Film Archives. Deadline is December 16, 1991. BACA/THE BROOKLYN ARTS COUNCIL, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11238. Tel: (718)783-3077 or 783-4469.

**2) OBERHAUSEN INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL (KURZFILMTAGE), April 30-May 6**

This is probably the most prestigious Short Film Festival in the world. Now under new management for its 38th annual edition, the films selected might not all have a socio-political or a Structuralist grounding, but I wouldn't bet on it. Only one or two American animated shorts are selected each year, and these have more usually been on the borderline between experimental animation and experimental film, utilizing optical effects. However, if your film is selected, it will reach a huge audience of extremely intelligent Europeans, many of whom have a nice budget from their TV stations with which to purchase your film. Deadline is March 1st. No fee. Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Christian-Steger-Strasse 10, Postfach 10 15 05, D-4200 Oberhausen 1, Germany. Tel: (0208) 807008. FAX: (02 08) 85 25 91

**3) INTERNATIONAL ANIMATED FILM & CARTOON FESTIVAL, BRUSSELS (Feb. 7-16, 1992)**

FOLIOSCOPE, whose leaders are also the editors of the international ASIFA NEWS, organizes this annual non-competitive event which presents the best in the last year's animation from around the world. Films are "by invitation only", it seems, but if you're ambitious, it wouldn't hurt to send them a tape, just in case they've missed seeing it at the festivals. Write Folioscope, 19 rue de la Rhetorique, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: 32-2-534-4125. FAX: 32-2-534-2279.

**4) INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, CARDIFF (March 10-15, 1992)**

Known years ago as the Cambridge Animation Festival, this biannual festival moved first to Bristol and now to Cardiff, the new booming Welsh center of animation. This is another "by-invitation-only" event, but they do encourage you to submit video copies of your latest work, enclosing details of title, original format and running time. Make sure also that your casette is clearly marked with your name and return address. Though not officially recognized by ASIFA, this is an up and coming festival, thanks to its directrice Irene Kotlarz, with important, well-organized events, one of which, this time around, will be a show of New York Independents, organized with the help and introduction of George Griffin. Cardiff Int'l Animation Festival, 69 Well Street, London W1P 3RB, England. Tel: 071 580 6202, FAX: 071 436 8934.

Many of you have been sending films to festivals for quite some time, some of you are just beginning. I'd like to get some feedback from you about the way in which you are being treated. Now that most of these festivals know I am on the ASIFA Board, and that I am writing these columns, my own films are being returned immediately after the event, without torn sprocket holes, my calls and FAXes are answered within a reasonable time, and I even receive festival catalogs in the mail. Some festivals, like Wellington, Melbourne, Hiroshima, Annecy, Shanghai and Stuttgart abroad, and Sinking Creek here in the U.S., have always handled things impeccably, much to the credit of their directors and staffs. Many of the others seem to have improved through the years, at least as far as it concerned my submissions. I'd like to find out about your experiences. ASIFA cannot really act to improve these festival without concrete evidence of problems, and the evidence must come from you. We now have a very effective international lobbying group. These festivals need our support but they now are beginning to understand they must continually earn it. Please take the time to WRITE me whenever you experience a problem (Don't call, leave a message and hope I call you back, as I have no budget for long-distance calls from Vermont).

David Ehrlich, RR I, Box 50, Randolph, VT. 05060
FAX(802)234-5401

# NEW YORK UPDATE

BY TOM WARBURTON

Once again I'm here to tell all you ASIFA EAST members what's going on in the wild world of New York animation. I know that we're in a recession and everything but I'm going to have to prove to you guys that there is work here and I'm going to show you who's doing it. So without going into a big production number, let's get things started.

First stop on the studio express this month was Buzzco Associates located smack dab in the middle of mid-town Manhattan. This studio is one of the few commercial studios that actually concentrates on getting independent films out and it's been a banner year for those films. The first indy film that the dynamic duo of Candy Kugel and Vincent Cafarelli put out in 1987 entitled "A Warm Reception in L.A." was recently included in a movie marathon for the Film Society of Lincoln Center while their second film, "Snowy and the Seven Dorps", which was released in 1990 garnered a bronze prize in the Cairo Festival for Children all the way out in Egypt. If you're not impressed yet then I'll tell you that Candy and Vincent got up in front of 2500 people at the closing night of the New York Film Festival to introduce their third film "Fast Food Matador" which showed with David Mamet's "Homicide". Three films just ain't enough for the gang at Buzzco so you can bet they're hard at work finishing up their latest project entitled, "We Love It". Candy tells me that it'll be finished in early 1992, so stay tuned here and find out where it goes.

On the business side of Buzzco things have been a little slow but not unproductive. They've completed a bunch of animated puzzles for a new kid's show, "What's the Bug Idea?" produced through the Children's Television Workshop and a commercial spot for the Dayton, Ohio heavy metal radio station WAZU. Also completed was a commercial for Chef Boyardee Pasta starring none other than the infamous Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and currently in production is a spot for a Southern bank in which a hopeful hen watches her nest egg grow to great proportions.

Buzzco's "Fast Food Matador"

On the charitable side of life, Buzzco has donated it's talents to the AIDS Awareness program by doing a 30 second spot through Manhattan Cable and New York Women in Film, of which Candy is a member. If you subscribe to Manhattan cable you'll be seeing this one in the near future.

One last thing I definitely want to mention about Buzzco is their six year holiday tradition of cooking approximately 80 dozen brownies in one day for special clients, friends and suppliers. I'm talking about homemade, baked from scratch, melt in your mouth brownies which "lucky" employees and friends help them bake during a twelve hour spree. I can tell you this because I'm a two year veteran of the Buzzco brownie day and don't even think about calling me up to ask how you can get some. If you really want some, you'll have to hire Buzzco to do you're latest animated project.

I have to tell you now that my next victim of the press does not have a studio in New York, but does have one in Virginia. While this is supposed to be a New York update, I think I can let it slide because she used to run Chelsea animation here in the city and is still within ASIFA EAST jurisdiction. She also just happens to be the sister of another New York animation veteran Irene Cerdas. So, if you don't already know who I'm talking about, I'll tell you now that I'm talking about Janet Scagnelli and she's one of the unsung heroes of the animation ink and paint profession. She started Chelsea Animation back in 1981 and worked on project's for such companies as Nestle's, Kraft Foods and Sunkist. She has done ink and paint for the pilot episode of Nickelodeon's "Doug" show and still does a lot of projects for them. She also became involved in the pioneer career of cel restoration and informs me that her studio is one of only three that does it.

Last year Janet found that it was time to pack up her cel vinyl, move out of New York City, and move down to Shockoe Bottom, Virginia. While most people decide to leave because of a lack of work, Janet tells me that she left to close the gap in along distance relationship with the man of her dreams. That's a good enough reason for me and it makes me real glad to hear that business is going strong for her. The mail order cel restoration part of her career is booming with the recent demand for the art form and as I write this, she's on her way back for a visit to The Big Apple and the Sotheby's Animation Art Auction. Animation art wasn't made to last so Janet will be on hand to offer her talents to animation art buyers and make their purchases look like new. Also in her line up of things going on is her inclusion in the "Women in Comics" show at the Cartoon Art Museum out in San Francisco. Just to show you that there is intelligent life on this planet, there is a part of this show for color stylists which Janet more than qualifies to be filed under.

When Janet gets back to Virginia, she'll have plenty of other work waiting for her like a spot for Ogilvie Home Perms

continued on page 14

# INDEPENDENT BULLETIN by Ray Kasarin

If we never figure out exactly what independent animators are, we can nevertheless agree that they maintain a lower profile than commercial studios. Their work is largely neglected by trade journals while, paradoxically, it is often the most inspired, whether in a commercial or fine-art context. In this space, ANYMATOR will shed much-needed light on independent animators and their activities.

Joey Ahlbum has just completed a new end credit sequence for Sesame Street.

Sesame Street runs full screen credits only on Friday. CTW producer Arleen Sherman asked Ahlbum to create a combined animation/live-action montage over which the show's end titles will be superimposed.

The sequence takes place in New York City. Ahlbum first choreographed the scenes in storyboard form. Then, CTW filmed children and puppets dancing against a bluescreen. Finally, Ahlbum designed and animated backgrounds in which the children appear. Bold cel graphics depict subways, parks and buildings which dance to a "funky" version of the Sesame Street theme music.

The new credits are expected to air beginning late January.

Ken Brown and Lisa Crafts also have been busy at work for Sesame Street. At this writing, they are completing their eighth segment this season.

All use cel animation, in a variety of techniques. Crafts says, "If you're really astute, you can tell that we did 'em. We're combining our styles until they're neither his or hers, but theirs." A film about counting to 20 takes Ken Brown's '50's-styled rubber stamp design and combines them with differently-textures papers. Another film entitled "Bud, the Bird" uses still photographs of antique toys, shot from many angles, mounted on cels to show a bird in a top hat, flying (in a dodge'em car) through painted backgrounds. Performance artist Alva Rogers ("School Daze") provided vocals. For "F-Faces", Crafts and Brown each drew eight different faces and then animated transitions between them. Painting the cels was "an amazing job," because they were all metamorphosing color.

Crafts and Brown also have two upcoming gallery exhibitions of their paintings and silkscreens. Brown's silkscreens are color limited-editions of his pointillist "caption-art" cartoons. Crafts' paintings are "quiet, quirky landscapes that celebrate idiosyncratic American roadside business and backyard extravaganzas." Selected works will appear as part of the group show "Exiles on Main Street" at CBGB 313 Gallery, 313 Bowery, beginning December 18; and an exhibit devoted wholly to their work opens at the Luz de Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles, June, 1992.

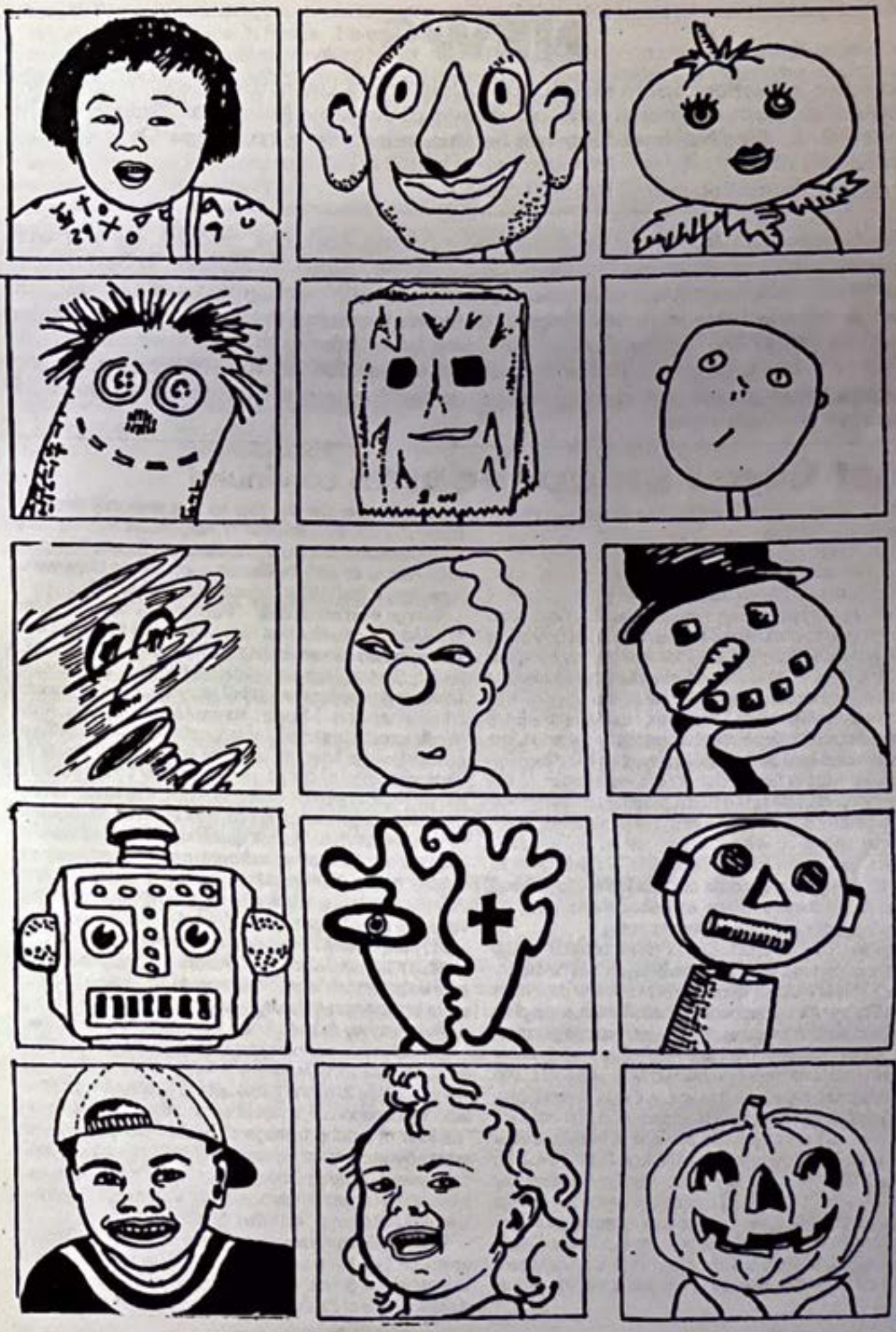
Motion-control animator Johan Edstrom has, this fall, completed four commercials and two music videos. Edstrom directed "two unusually cool beer ads" for Heinecken. Produced for Caribbean and Puerto Rican markets, these spots show 32 bottle caps dancing in a conga line and doing the Twist. Edstrom used Harry to composite the bottle caps against a live closeup of the beer being poured. The agency is Y & R, Puerto Rico.

Edstrom also directed animation for two Anchorage Times commercials. These spots, directed by Portfolio's Richard Reiss, show a newspaper spinning and opening to reveal a model car, a camera, a shopping cart, Wagnerian prop-helmet and other objects to illustrate the subjects covered by different sections in the newspaper. The agency is Porcaro/Blankenship, Anchorage.

Edstrom, with live-action director Adam Bernstein, has just finished work on two music videos produced by Epoch Films, Los Angeles. "Burger Man," a ZZ Top video, parodies 1950's sci-fi movies. Edstrom created shots of a spaceship taking off and landing, and of a monster puppet, designed to intercut with shots of a costumed actor. In the other video, for rap group Sir Mixalot, Edstrom and Bernstein used vegetables and fruits to represent "butts and other sexual parts. The song is about butts."

Presently, Edstrom is at work on a one-minute montage for the feature "Swoon," about the Chicago Leopold and Loeb Murder case in the 1920's. This segment combines still photography, typography and motion graphics to explain the procedures of forensic analysis. The film, directed by Tom Kalin ("Poisin") of Apparatus Productions, premieres January at the Sundance Film Festival.

RIGHT: Artwork from "F-Faces", designed and animated by Ken Brown and Lisa Crafts for CTW's Sesame Street.



# NEWS

December is Michael Sporn month. Each Sunday in December the animated films of Michael Sporn Animation will be shown at Sunday Animation Brunch at The Tribeca Grill. Five half-hour films will be shown including Ira Sleeps Over and The Little Match Girl.
For more information call (212) 941-3900.

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NBC is expected to cancel its Saturday morning cartoons and fill the slot with informational programming like the "Today" show. Already affiliates in Seattle and Sacramento have replaced cartoons and soon all 200 local affiliates will follow. The move is reported due to poor ratings and low advertising revenue. All three major networks report low audiences but NBC has been hardest hit.
Whether this is a beginning of an industry re-evaluation of children's programming or some other vague warning of where animation might be headed on network television is of question.

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# East Coast Independents continued

artist" by virtue of the fact that "the innovative visuals conclude with the familiar corporate logo"? Although I didn't think Sky's graphics had very much to do with the final logo or with what MTV is about, and I chuckled too at the end, the vision of Sky's first 8 1/2 seconds had reached millions of young people who would otherwise never have gotten to see his work. And if the perceptions of only a few of the people watching were stretched by this spot, the experience was of great value, distinct from the money that Sky must have been happy to receive.

Is this an "independent" film? Yes, I think that the 8 1/2 minutes were a totally personal expression of the artist. The addition of the final 36 frames, I saw not as MTV's exploitation of the artist but as the artist's exploitation of the corporation. I chuckled, as did Sky, because he managed to be well-paid for doing what he would otherwise do for free, simply by ending up with the logo, just as AFI and NEA grantees, who make independent films, are dutibound to end with one or two seconds of AFI and NEA logos, and beginning animators often end their films with an acknowledgement of their parents largesse.

Suppose Sky had spent two or three seconds of the segment on the logo, would that have negated its "independence"? This is a thorny issue, of course. A few days after seeing Sky's work, we happened to be in Boston, seeing Flip Johnson's work. After screening his very intense personal films, ROAR FROM WITHIN and PULP, Flip gave the now familiar chuckle as he put on his two MTV segments. The logo didn't just appear at the end, but was layered constantly throughout the segment as part of an Expressionist bombardment of images, the very kind of imaging that is Flip's personal trademark. The MTV logo COULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED, but it was used in the way Flip would use any graphic image. It could have been any acronym in a foreign language, or a hieroglyph or a random assemblage of line. What I am saying is that this was a pure Flip Johnson piece that reached the audience of millions of rocking teenagers, and that I felt that Flip had somehow put something over on the corporation. the fact that he was well-paid does not distort, for me, the ascription of independent film, nor does the fact that the MTV logo is used so often. For me, "independence has to do with the Gestalt or experience of the work. How does it feel? What is the thinking behind it?

George then responded: "Through their behavior, both Flip and Sky revealed that they understood the distinction between their own work and the MTV stuff. Both "chuckled" and showed the logo work separate from their independent films, as if to suggest a kind of re-cycling of art ideas into commercial ideas. Many artists would chuckle at this. Andy Warhol created a storm by appropriating the Campbell Soup can and, years later, he was the first of many artists to participate in an ad campaign for a brand of Vodka. Both are art, perhaps even interesting, dynamic, innovative, or any other description one could use (we use the same language to think about these formal qualities). But the ad work is essentially collaborative, authored in part by an agency art director (who in turn is part of a network of creative and account constraints) and the artist, while the huge Pop sculpture must be considered Warhol's own artistic statement, independent from the context of advertising.

I don't believe that either Flip or Sky "put something over on the corporation" that hired them to do an on-air promo piece in their own style. They were simply earning a living doing what they do best. And if the work is innovative they will be able to do more work for their client. As for the frame count formula for determining collusion with logo/client, I would say that even one frame out of 240 would negate the work's independence; it would become the film's message. "millions of rocking teenagers" would simply appreciate great animation as an expression of MTV, not an independent animator. Being "independent" means having to explain what your work means, even if it's nonsense or derivative, and not saying, "it's what they wanted." "

That should stimulate your letters! Next month, Danish animator, Lejf Marcussen, gives his opinions on his own independence (while working for Danish-TV) and on the independence of the Americans he met this past month.

**Richard M. Protovin**, animator, painter and animation professor, died of AIDS related illnesses on Friday, December 6, 1991, at his mother's home in Florida. He was 46.

Through his work, and indeed in everything he did, Richard had a touch that left a large and indelible mark on the world. Those of us who were lucky (or clever) enough to know him, to be his student, colleague or friend, remember his unequalled generosity, his passion for life and his boisterous laugh.

A native of the Bronx, NY, Richard received his Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of South Florida. He returned to New York in the 1970's, where he established himself as a noted independent animator. He was Associate Professor at New York University from 1979 to 1988 where he founded and headed the animation program at the university's Tisch School of the Arts.

Richard's 20-year history of exhibitions, films and awards took him and his work around the globe. His films have been screened at the Museum of Modern Art's "New Director's/New Films" series; Cannes, France; Venice, Italy; Tokyo, Japan; and Moscow. His work was also screened in the "Best Short Films" series at the Seattle International Film Festival and won awards at the Sinking Creek Film Festival in Nashville, Tenn. His paintings have been seen at the Clayton Gallery in Tampa, Florida, the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida and the Museum of Art and Science in Daytona, Florida. His paintings are in many prestigious collections.

There will be a memorial service in New York in January, and a benefit animation screening and animation artwork auction for the newly established "Richard Protovin Memorial Animation Scholarship Fund" will be held on March 15 at the Tribeca Film Center.

Letters of condolence should be sent to Doris Protovin (his mother) and Jody Protovin (his sister), at 8054 34th Ave N; St. Petersbergh, Florida, 33714.

Richard Protovin will be greatly missed. All we can do is watch for his spirit and "carry on".

*— Lorie Loeb*
*Assistant Professor of Film and Animation Production*
*Department of Film and Television, New York University*

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## The Fourth Los Angeles International Animation Celebration

continued

time riding the crest of the animation boom. The Alternative TV seminar was fun for me, mostly because I got to be on the panel. I joined Michael Sporn, the Liquid TV producers, Bob Chmiel of the Family Channel, and moderator Will Ryan, to discuss the state of animation on cable.

The festival ended with another party at a club in Santa Monica.

In L.A., it's easy to fill up a club with members of the animation industry. I was able to spend my last evening in L.A. catching up with everyone I'd missed in the course of the week. I got to see former New Yorker and current L.A. transplant John McIntyre, who is now working at Duck Soup. All in all, the festival was not only fun and entertaining, but it gave us all a chance to spend time with people we don't often get to see — in the city that is the headquarters of the animation industry.

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## NEW YORK UPDATE

continued

done by New York's own Streamline. She and her crew are also in the middle of painting a film by this newsletter's own editor and ASIFA EAST Executive Board member John R. Dilworth and there's a lot of work on Nickelodeon's Nicktoons from both Jumbo Pictures and J.J. Sedelmaier animation. You Have to admit that it's a gutsy move to go from New York to Virginia to do your animation but Janet can tell you this: It worked.

That's all I can tell you, animation fans, but if you pick up next month's newsletter I'll be giving you the latest scoop on Ovation Animation. If by any chance you or your studio has anything you think is worth telling the ASIFA EAST members you can give me a call at (212) 995-2087 and I'll be sure to include it in my next write up. It won't even cost you a dime so what have you got to lose? But, let's just keep the crank calls to a minimum, okay?

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